

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today the return of a 29 count indictment against Terrence Croteau -age 30, from Welland, Ontario. Croteau was previously charged in a criminal complaint on September 3, 2004. The indictment charges him with conspiracy, twenty counts of mail fraud, four counts of wire fraud, one count of use of a false and fictitious name in furtherance of mail fraud, two counts of mailing or transmitting threatening communications, and one count of making harassing telephone calls. Croteau was arrested on June 10, 2005 in Newark, NJ after a flight from Cancun.

The indictment alleges that Defendant operated a business directory scam out of Montreal, Quebec and Welland, Ontario between 2000 and the late spring, 2004. The Indictment alleges that the Defendant employed telemarketers who telephoned U.S. businesses under the false pretenses that they were from a legitimate business which published business directories, including an on line business directory on the Internet. The Indictment alleges that the Defendant's telemarketers used a variety of deceptive tactics to close sales, including duping businesses into thinking that they were renewing or continuing supposedly pre-existing listings, or simply confirming a shipping address. The specific amount of losses to U.S. consumers is unknown at this time but is believed to be around three million dollars.

Three of the twenty eight counts are punishable by a term of imprisonment not to exceed three years. Fourteen of the counts are punishable by a term of imprisonment not to exceed five years. Twelve of the counts are punishable by a term of imprisonment not to exceed twenty years. All counts are punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250,000.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service with substantial assistance from the Federal Trade Commission in Chicago. The Niagara Regional Police Service in Welland, Ontario and the Ontario Provincial Police, assisted by the Toronto Police Service, conducted a concurrent investigation. The investigation arose as a result of the efforts of the Toronto Strategic Partnership. The case has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Bruce Reppert for prosecution.

Defendant was also named in a civil suit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois by the Federal Trade Commission.

An indictment and a criminal complaint represent formal charges against a defendant. Under our law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.